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FM AIT TAIPEI

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INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 7354  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 8956  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 9145  
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU PRIORITY 2148  
RUEHGZ/AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU PRIORITY 0599  
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG PRIORITY 8635  
RUEHGH/AMCONSUL SHANGHAI PRIORITY 1414  
RUEHSH/AMCONSUL SHENYANG PRIORITY 6122  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHHJJAA/JICPAC HONOLULU HI  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TAIPEI 002333

SIPDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (ADDING REASON FOR CLASSIFICATION)

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/15/2032

TAGS: PREL PGOV CH TW

SUBJECT: TAIWAN ANALYST COMMENTS ON PRC REACTION TO DPP UN  
REFERENDUM

REF: TAIPEI 2014

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Classified By: AIT Acting Director Robert S. Wang.

Reason(s): 1.4 (B/D)

¶1. (C) Summary. Taiwan cross-Straight expert Lin Chong-pin told AIT that he assesses the PRC as very unlikely to "overreact" to the ruling DPP's UN referendum. He acknowledged, however, that Beijing is exerting direct and indirect pressures on Taiwan authorities in opposition to DPP the referendum. Professor Lin, who served as Vice Minister of Defense in 2003-2004, is widely respected as an independent analyst of military affairs and cross-strait relations and has traveled regularly to mainland China. End Summary.

¶2. (C) During a meeting on October 9, Foundation on International and Cross-Straight Studies (FICSS) President Lin Chong-pin told AIT Deputy Director that his own analysis indicates the PRC is very unlikely to "overreact" to the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) referendum on joining the UN under the name "Taiwan," despite its continuing direct and indirect pressures on Taiwan authorities. Professor Lin, who served as Vice Minister of Defense in 2003-2004, is widely respected as an independent analyst of military affairs and cross-strait relations and has traveled regularly to mainland China. Lin, who is politically independent and not affiliated with either the ruling DPP or the opposition KMT, obtained his Ph.D in International Relations from Georgetown University in 1986.

¶3. (C) Lin offered DDIR several reasons for his analysis. First, he argued that Beijing currently appears to have a number of other higher priorities, including internal CCP party politics, sustaining domestic economic growth and development, maintaining social stability and further enhancing PRC-U.S. relations. Lin noted that his sources in Beijing have told him that President Hu Jintao has met less frequently with the Taiwan Leading Group than his predecessor Jiang Zemin did. Moreover, Lin indicated that Hu and the current Beijing leadership are more confident about developments on all fronts despite continued cautiousness.

Hu is consolidating his power, the economy is doing relatively well, and PRC-U.S. relations appear to be at an all-time high. Lin said this means that Beijing does not want to upset the current balance and does not feel under great pressure to show strength with respect to its Taiwan policy.

¶4. (C) More generally, Lin indicated that he and other analysts tend to see Hu Jintao as either more flexible, or at least wanting to be more flexible, on PRC policy toward Taiwan. (Comment. Hu's speech at the opening of the current 17th Party congress may further support this view. End Comment.) Hence, the expectation in Taiwan is that Hu would be prepared to undertake diplomatic initiatives vis--vis Taiwan after the March presidential election, whoever is elected President here. Lin suggested that this would involve greater flexibility in dealing with the Taiwan issue in international organizations, among other moves. (Note: Per reftel, Chairman of Taiwan's Strait Exchange Foundation Hong Chi-Chang similarly voiced his expectation that cross-Strait relations will likely expand further soon after the March 2008 election, even in the case of a DPP victory. End Note.) Assuming this is the case, Lin continued, Beijing would want to make sure it does not overreact to developments prior to the presidential election. In response to DDIR's question as to whether he had actually seen any of these points articulated in mainland documents, Lin said that he has not. At the same time, he explained, the Beijing leadership would not likely articulate these views, because this would compromise its pressure on Taiwan to toe the line on independence issues.

¶5. (C) Comment. Lin's analysis reflects very much the essence of those of many other thoughtful observers in Taiwan. Some note that the UN referendum itself does not appear to be a "red line" issue because it is not likely to pass and, even if it does pass, the referendum as currently worded does not mandate any specific action toward formal independence. Others also cite PRC concerns about not disrupting the Beijing 2008 Olympics and the Shanghai 2010 World Expo, all variations on the same theme that the PRC has

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much more to lose than to gain from overreacting to current developments in Taiwan. End Comment.

WANG